

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3130

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 4294

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: SF, PINT

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS GROW FOR ANOTHER INDEPENDENT HOMELAND

REFERENCE: PRETORIA A-144

1. SUMMARY: CHIEF MINISTER LUCAS MANGOPE APPEARS TO BE MANEUVERING BOPHUTHATSWANA INTO BECOMING SECOND "BANTUSTAN" TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIEF MINISTER LUCAS MANGOPE OF BOPHUTHATSWANA CALLED MEETING NOV 5 OF TSWANA CHIEFS AND HEADMEN WHICH OVERWHELMING VOTED TO BACK HIS RECOMMENDATION THAT BOPHUTHATSWANA FOLLOW TRANSKEI'S LEAD AND SEEK INDEPENDENCE. MANGOPE'S BOPHUTHATSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY SCHEDULED TO HOLD CONGRESS NOV 8 AND WILL MOST PROBABLY RATIFY SIMILAR RESOLUTION. MANGOPE HAS ALSO CALLED FOR SPECIAL TWO-DAY SESSION OF BOPHUTHATSWANA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO MEET NOV 10-20 TO CONSIDER INDEPENDENCE TOPIC. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING BOUND TO BE STORMY AFFAIR AS STRONG OPPOSITION TO

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MANGOPE AND INDEPENDENCE SCHEME WILL BE VOICED BY OPPOSITION

POLITICAL LEADERS HERMAN MASELOANE OF BOPHUTHATSWANA NATIONAL PARTY (BNP) AND CHIEF TIDIMANE PILANE OF SEOPOSENGWE PARTY. EXPECTING SOME TROUBLE, MANGOPE HAS INVITED TRANSKEI CHIEF MINISTER MATANZIMA TO ATTEND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING AS HIS PERSONAL GUEST AND THUS BOLSTER HIS INDEPENDENCE CONCEPT. TO DATE MANGOPE HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF TIMING FOR ACTUAL BOPHUTHATSWANA INDEPENDENCE.

3. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE:

COMMENT: MANGOPE'S MOTIVES REMAIN UNCLEAR. HE HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED AS ONE OF MOST ENIGMATIC OF HOMELAND LEADERS. INDEPENDENCE SCHEME MAY BE OUTGROWTH OF MANGOPE'S RAMPANT TSWANA NATIONALISM. BOPHUTHATSWANA IS ONE OF MOST COSMOPOLITAN OF HOMELANDS IN ITS ETHNIC MAKEUP. LARGE MINORITIES OF SOTHOS, NDEBELES AND OTHER NON-TSWANAS EXIST. IN RECENT MONTHS MANGOPE HAS ADOPTED POLICIES AIMED AT LIMITING THEIR INFLUENCE AND TENURE WITHIN HOMELAND AND HAS EVEN SPOKEN OF "INFLUX CONTROL" TO KEEP NON-TSWANA AFRICANS OUT. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT MANGOPE, FEARFUL OF SAG MANIPULATIONS IN FAVOR OF HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS (REFAIR), MAY HAVE ADOPTED INDEPENDENCE STANCE TO CURRY FAVOR WITH POWERS-THAT-BE. ACCORDING TO INFORMED PRESS AND HOMELAND POLITICAL SOURCES, MANGOPE'S CURRENT MOVE HAS BEEN GIVEN IMPETUS BY MERGER OF HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS, MASELOANE AND PILANE, AND BY STRONG THREAT THIS POSES TO HIS CONTINUED LEADERSHIP. FACED WITH GENERAL ELECTION IN TWO YEARS IN WHICH HIS PARTY STANDS GOOD CHANCE OF LOSING POPULAR VOTE, MANGOPE, ACCORDING TO HIS VIEW, HAS SEIZED UPON INDEPENDENCE ISSUE AS ONE BY WHICH HE CAN GENERATE MORE POPULAR SUPPORT.

4. THIS VIEW MAY HAVE SOME SUBSTANCE. EMBOFFS' VISIT TO HOMELANDS HAVE REVEALED THAT HOMELAND DWELLERS ARE MORE FAVORABLE DISPOSED TO CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENCE THAN URBAN BRETHREN. MASS OF RURAL HOMELAND OCCUPANTS GENERALLY APATHETIC, BUT MANY WELL-TRAINED AFRICAN TEACHERS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF LOCAL ELITE VIEW HOMELAND INDEPENDENCE AS WAY OF GAINING GREATER CONTROL OVER OWN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIVES AND RIDDING SELVES OF WHITE OVERLORDS. MAJORITY OF TWO-THIRDS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S TSWANA POPULATION WHICH LIVES OUTSIDE BOPHUTHATSWANA MOST PROBABLY FIRMLY AGAINST INDEPENDENCE FOR THIS FRAGMENTED "BANTUSTAN." HOWEVER, GIVEN CONFIGURATION OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND POWER OF ITS APPOINTED CHIEF-MEMBERS, MANGOPE WILL MOST PROBABLY BE ABLE TO PUSH THROUGH HIS INDEPENDENCE PLAN IF THAT IS HIS DESIRE. POSSIBILITY, OF COURSE, EXISTS THAT MANGOPE NOT INTERESTED IN

IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE BUT RATHER HAS TAKEN CUE FROM
MATANZIMA'S EXPERIENCE IN WHICH INDICATION OF WILLING-
NESS TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENCE STRENGTHENS BARGAINING
POSITION WITH SAG.

6. THOSE WHO ASSERT THAT MANGOPE'S MOVE PROMPTED BY
POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARGUE THAT OTHER CHIEF MINISTERS,
NOTABLY PHATUDI OF LEBOWA, WHO IS CERTAIN TO FACE STRONG
OPPOSITION FROM HIS SACKED MINISTER OF INTERIOR COLLINS
RAMUSSI, ARE CONSIDERING TAKING INDEPENDENCE PATH AS WELL.
MANGOPE'S MOTIVES SHOULD BECOME SOMEWHAT CLEARER IN
NEAR FUTURE.
BOWDLER

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